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TELEGRAM

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY MADRID

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LIMDIS

JOINT STATE/DEFENSE MESSAGE

REF: MADRID 3375

SUBJ: ANNOUNCED 401ST TFW CONVERSION

1. BEGIN BACKGROUND FYI. ON AUG 20, SENATE FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE STAFFER PINCUS PHONED DEPT., NOTED HE JUST RETURNED FROM VACATION AND SO JUST BECAME AWARE PRESS STORIES OF 401ST CONVERSION. PINCUS ASKED SIGNIFICANCE OF 72 VICE 54 AIRCRAFT IN THE CONVERSION (HE HAD SEEN F-4 SQUADRONS IN FAR EAST WITH ONLY 18), AND ALSO INQUIRED ABOUT GOS REACTION. HIS GENERAL REACTION TO DEPT RESPONSES WAS THAT HE FOUND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO BELIEVE CHANGES IN THE 401ST INVOLVED NO CHANGE IN ITS MISSION BECAUSE OTHERWISE THERE WOULD BE NO REASON TO HAVE AN INCREASE IN NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT AT THIS TIME. PINCUS VOLUNTEERED HE WOULD BE LOOKING FURTHER INTO QUOTE REAL MOTIVATION END QUOTE

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BEHIND THIS CHANGE. DURING SAME CONVERSATION, PINCUS IMPLIED THAT THE COMMITTEE WOULD BE PREPARING FORCEFUL ATTACK AGAINST THE DOLS 50 MILLION SUPPLEMENTAL MILITARY ASSISTANCE REQUEST. END BACKGROUND FYI.

2. IN LIGHT OF THE PINCUS CALL, WE FEAR IT IS POSSIBLE SENATE MAY FIND UNCONVINCING THE ARGUMENT THAT THIS INCREASE IN AIRCRAFT WAS MOTIVATED MERELY BY A DESIRE TO CONFORM TO OVERSEAS COMPLEMENT LEVELS, AND THAT STATE/DEFENSE HAD NO OTHER PURPOSE IN APPROVING IT. ACCORDINGLY, ISSUE OF NUMERICAL INCREASE IN AIRCRAFT BY 33 PERCENT CURRENTLY PROGRAMMED IN THE CONVERSION COULD PERHAPS PREJUDICE CONGRESSIONAL APPROVAL OF THE DOLS 50 MILLION AID.

3. TO ASSIST IN FURTHER CONSIDERATION OF THIS MATTER IN VIEW OF COMMENTS IN PARA 2, IT WOULD BE APPRECIATED IF WE COULD HAVE THE EMBASSY'S ASSESSMENT OF THE FOLLOWING POINTS: (A) WHAT IS THE LIKELIHOOD THAT THE GOS WILL FORMALLY OBJECT TO THE CONVERSION AS PLANNED (INCLUDING THE INCREASED NUMBER OF AIRCRAFT)? (B) WHAT IF THE CONVERSION WERE ON A ONE-FOR-ONE RATIO? (C) IF WE NOW SUGGEST THAT THE CONVERSION COULD TAKE PLACE ON A ONE-FOR-ONE BASIS, WOULD THE SPANISH CONSIDER THEY HAD ACHIEVED AN ADVANTAGEOUS BARGAINING POSITION IN THE NEXT ROUND OF NEGOTIATIONS? (CF. PARA 3(C) AND (D) REFTEL), E.G. WOULD THERE BE SPANISH INSISTENCE IN FUTURE NEGOTIATIONS ON ANY CHANGE IN U.S. DEPLOYMENTS (EITHER INCREASES OR WITHDRAWALS) BEING SUBJECT TO SPANISH VETO, OR IS IT LIKELY THAT THE SPANISH WILL INSIST ON THIS VETO RIGHT REGARDLESS? (D) HOW SERIOUSLY WOULD THE U.S. NEGOTIATING POSITION BE DAMAGED IF AT A LATER DATE CONGRESSIONAL PRESSURE FORCED WASHINGTON TO REVISE THE PLANNED NUMERICAL INCREASE IN AIRCRAFT OR IF THE CONGRESS SEIZED THIS CONVERSION/INCREASE AS THE PRETEXT FOR NOT APPROVING THE DOLS 50 MILLION AID REQUEST.
JOHNSON

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